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PICTURES IN VERSE



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



THE DESTINY-MAKER

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FRONTISPICE

PICTURES IN VERSE

BY

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WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAUD STUMM



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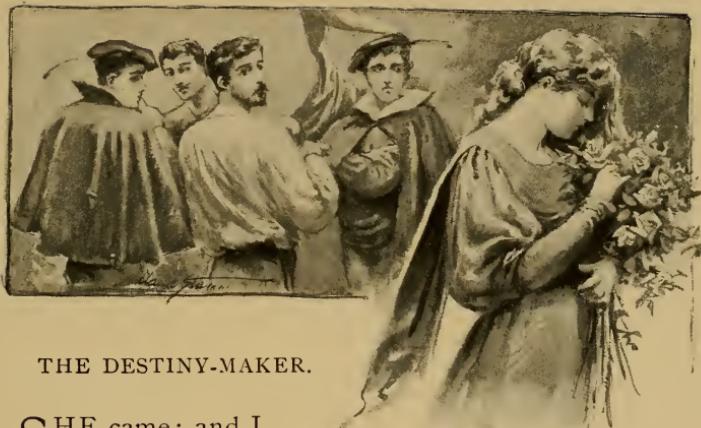
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PICTURES IN VERSE



THE DESTINY-MAKER.

HE came; and I
who linger'd there,
I saw that she
was very fair;
And, with my sighs
that pride suppress'd,
There rose a trembling
wish for rest.

But I, who had resolv'd to be
The maker of my destiny,
I turn'd me to my task and wrought,
And so forgot the passing thought.

She paused; and I who question'd there,
I heard she was as good as fair;
And in my soul a still, small voice
Enjoin'd me not to check my choice.

But I, who had resolv'd to be
The maker of my destiny,
I bade the gentle guardian down,
And tried to think about renown.

She left; and I who wander, fear
There's nothing more to see or hear;
Those walls that ward my paradise
Are very high, nor open twice.

And I, who had
resolv'd to be
The maker of
my destiny,
Can only wait
without the gate
And sit
and sigh—
“Too late!
too late!”



CAGED.

OUR jest and gossip ceased at last ;
It seem'd as if my lips were fast.
Ah me, such holy hopes loom'd then ;
My mind could only think, "Amen."
But soon she cried out, "How absurd!" —
And laugh'd, whereat her little bird
Caught up the music of the word,
And trill'd an echo, loud and long,
Till, deafen'd quite, she check'd the song.

"That bird," said she,—"Hush, hush, you thing!—
Flew in the window here, one spring.
We caught and caged him, and he grew
The sweetest pet that ever flew ;
I hold my finger toward him so,
And down he flies and lights, you know,
And pecks my hair and lips, and oh,
You ought to see how jantly
He perks his head and chirps for me !



CAGED.

13

“ Last year, he flew away, one day,
And then, the scene we had ! the way
We wept for him ; and search'd the town !
And how it made the neighbors frown
The twentieth time we ask'd for him !
But, just as day was growing dim,
He lit on yonder ash-tree limb ;
And ‘ Dick,’ I call'd, and back he flew ;
Now, did n't you, birdie ?—naughty you !”

With this again she laugh'd at him ;
And I,—I thought the room grew dim ;
And then I whisper'd : “ Dear, a word—
For I—I know one other bird
That longs so much to fly to you ;
And, dearest, you may cage it too ;
'T will sing, and serve, and be so true.”
And then she blush'd, and then she wept,
And then this bird of love she kept.



ALL IN ALL.

B E calm, O Wind, and gently blow,
Nor rouse the waves' commotion.
Ye Clouds, veil not the bay so low:
My love sails o'er the ocean.

Out, boatman, out! The wind will rise;
The yawl will find it stormy.
Ay, thrice thy fee.—Her signal flies.—
My love is waiting for me.

Blow on, ye Winds, your prey is flown;
Who cares for wave or weather?
My love, my own! no more alone,
We walk the shore together.

UNDER THE NEW MOON.

THE hills rang back our parting jest;
The dear, dear day was over;
The sun had sunk below the west;
We walk'd home through the clover.
Our words were gay, but thought astray
Our parting kept regretting,—
“The old old way!” it seem'd to say;
“The suns are always setting.”
Then, gazing back with longing soon,
At once my step grew bolder;
For, bright and new, I spied the moon
Just over my right shoulder.



UNDER THE NEW MOON.

I turn'd about and bade her look;
We were not superstitious;
We joked about that shining hook:
 Bright bait, and skies auspicious.
We joked, but, oh, I thought with woe,
 This bright bait lures me only,
Like more before it doom'd to go,
 And leave life dark and lonely.
“Past yon horizon, earth is strewn
 With broken moons,” I told her:
“Each bore a bright hope, too, each moon,
 When over my right shoulder.

“Alas to trust in each new light,
 A man were moonstruck, surely,—
A lunatic!”—We laugh'd outright,
 And then look'd back demurely.
Lo, faintly shown, the old moon's zone
 Made round and full the new one!
I thought: “Would my old love, made known,
 Show my new hope a true one?—
What would she say?”—I ask'd her soon,
 And took her hand to hold her.
“Ah love,” she sigh'd, “to-night the moon
 Is over my right shoulder.”



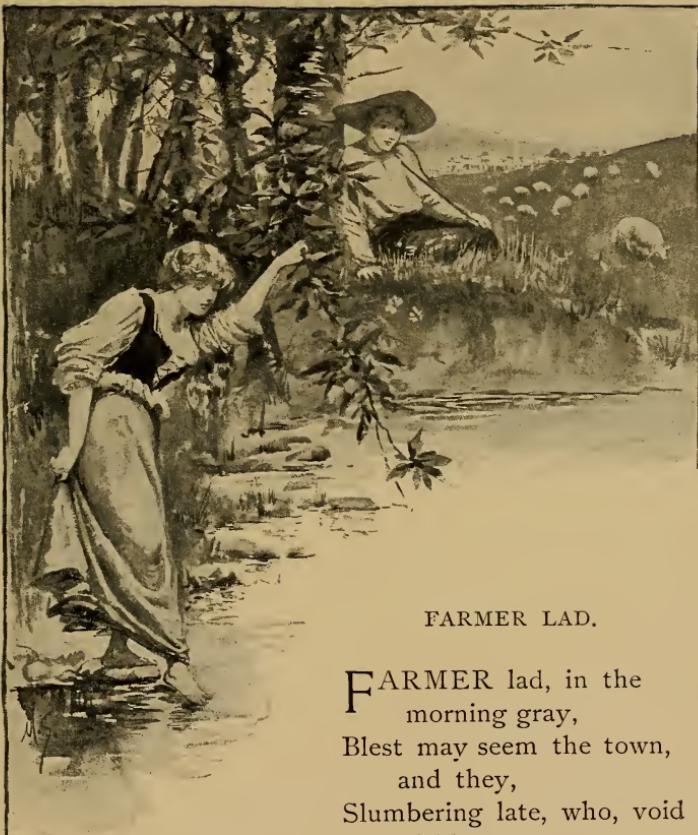
A MISAPPREHENSION.

NOT UNCOMMON.

IN loneliness I wander'd ;
When, lo, above me, ringing
Amid the breeze
That shook the trees,
A bird was sweetly singing.
I look'd, and through the leaves could see
The warbler nod and chirp for me.
“One friend is left me yet,” thought I,
And ventur'd near
His song to hear ;
But when he saw me drawing nigh,
Alas, in fright
He took to flight !
Not, not for me had been his care.
He sang to greet the sunny air,
And serve his own sweet nature.



In loneliness I ponder'd ;
And lo, sweet laughter woke there
The gentlest trills,
That broke in rills
About the lips that spoke there.
Through smiles and blushes burst the glee,—
And eyes that fill'd and flash'd for me.
“ Her soul,” I thought, “ has heard my sigh ”;
And, drawing near,
I bade her hear
My tale of love—but from her eye
The joy had flown.
Not I alone,
Alas, not I had been her care.
She fill'd the world with sweetness there,
To serve her own sweet nature.



FARMER LAD.

FARMER lad, in the
morning gray,
Blest may seem the town,
and they,
Slumbering late, who, void
of blame,
Seek at their leisure wealth and fame ;
But how many there, thy race would run
To know thy rest when the day is done !

Farmer lad, when the herd's faint bells
Clink far off o'er the sunburnt fells,
Better may seem the coin that calls
Ringing and bright from the town's cool halls ;
But how many there, would give all its gleams
For the golden light of thy guileless dreams !

Farmer lad, where the herd will drink
Waits a maid that bathes by the brink
Bare brown feet ; and the rill, made sweet,
Thrills to touch her who thee would greet.
There is more for thee in the blue of her eye
Than in all the towns that are under the sky.



HIS LOVE'S FRUITION.

“COME, Love, be mine,” the boy implored ;
And from his strong young heart there pour’d
Fresh streams of life that flush’d his face
And thrill’d his breast for Love’s embrace.
“ Nay, nay ; not yet,” his Love replied ;
“ The worth of boyhood must be tried.”
So, like the spring’s uncertain sun,
Love lured his hope ; but would not come.



“Come, Love, be mine,” the young man pray’d,
As if some angel were the maid;



And could with bliss have knelt beside
The only power that awed his pride.

"Nay, nay; not yet," his Love replied;
"For vintage time must life provide."
So brightly, like a summer sun,
Love cheer'd his way; but would not come.

"Come, Love, be mine," the strong man urged;
"The mounts above in cloud are merged;
And, hand in hand with thee, my life
Will better brave the looming strife."
"Nay, nay; not yet," his Love replied;
"The harvests wait; the fields are wide."
So, clouded like an autumn sun,
Love veil'd her light, and would not come.

"Come, Love, be mine," the old man said;
And meekly bow'd his whiten'd head;
Then, while it sank against his breast,
"O Love, has life not won its rest?"
"I come," his Love at last replied;
And clasp'd him; but he only sigh'd.
And, faint and chill, life's wintry sun
In gold had set; his Love had come.



THE FLOWER PLUCKED.

“ **Y**OU say you leave forever?
Our walks and talks have had their day?
You say this flower blooms not to stay,
Nor friendship ;—we must sever?—
Alas, to think my favorite flower,
That so delay’d its blooming hour

Through all the stormy weather,
Through March and April, May and June,
Has open'd now to close so soon !
Nay, nay ; it shall not fail me so.
I'll make it feel, if but my blow."—
She spoke, and smote the tender stalk
That bore the flower ; and in the walk
Fell flower and stalk together.

" Not so," he cried ; " nay, never.
Forgive it ! spare the flower ! alas ! "
And knelt and pick'd it from the grass.
" What, did she love thee ever ?
If so, the blow she gave to thee
Has made thee doubly dear to me.

Ah, flower, in sunny weather,
And not in March, nay, nay, in June
Thy leaves in opening brought this boon ;
Nor so shall close ! There waits for thee
One mission more, thy best to be ! "
He spoke, and placed the fallen flower
Against his heart—and so that hour
The maid and flower together.

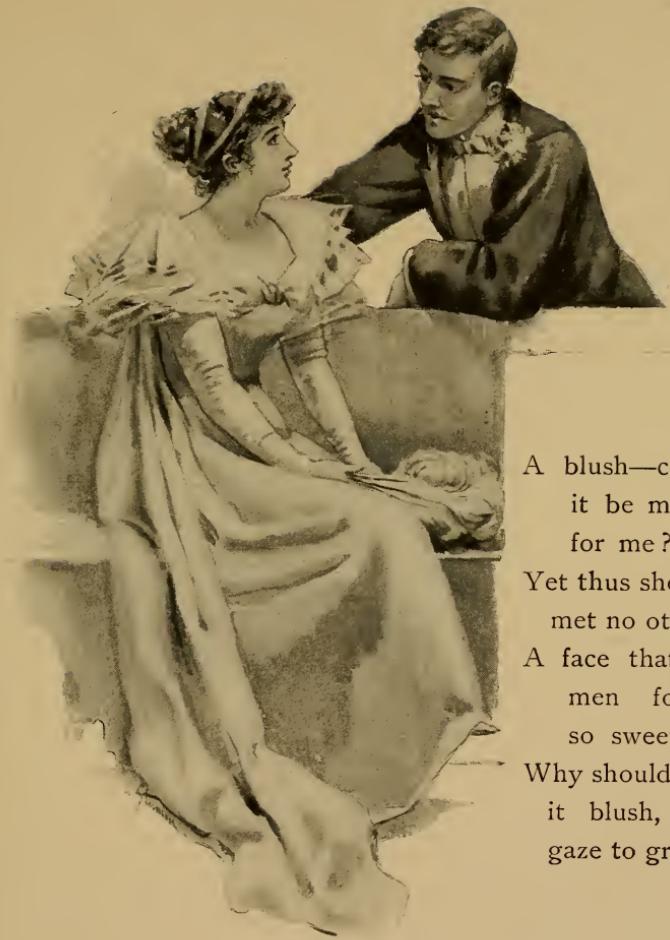


THE FLOWER PLUCKED.

THE BELLE.

A SMILE—could it be meant for me?—
Yet there she stood before me.
But she had charm'd so many eyes
And I was neither rich nor wise,—
The belle of all the town was she;
I seem'd a child,
She only smiled
Because she knew her mien was mild
While mine confusion bore me.

And praise—could it be meant for me?—
Ah, how could I suppose it?
The rarest minds I knew about
Had held her gauge of them in doubt.
A prize beyond us all was she;
But young was I;
And this was why
She thought my pride to gratify;
Yet I could but disclose it.



A blush—could
it be meant
for me?—

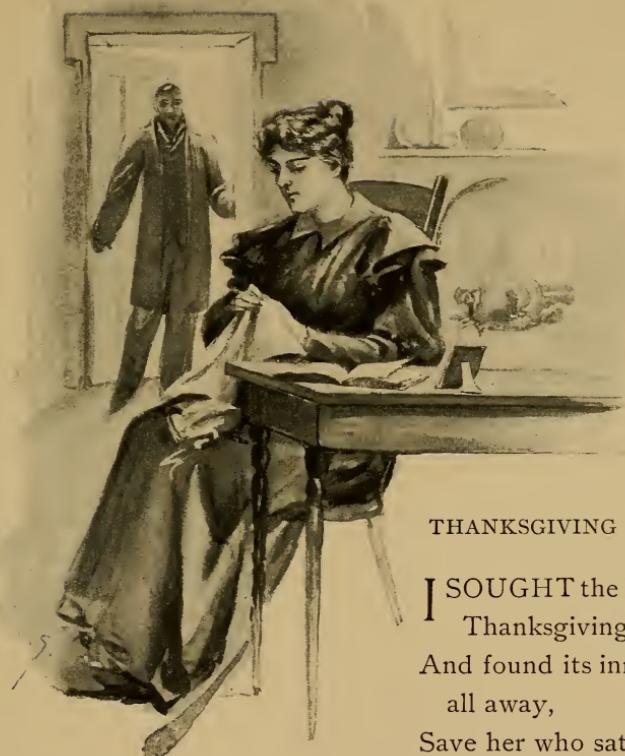
Yet thus she
met no other.

A face that all
men found
so sweet,

Why should
it blush, my
gaze to greet?

A belle whom all had sought was she ;
 Yet I could see
 Heave but for me
A sigh that strove and would be free.
 I spoke to free another.

She answer'd—All was meant for me—
 For me, her low tones proving ;
 And all my love had burst in flame
 To feel their ardor while they came.
“ A woman, whosoe'er she be,
 Is nothing more,
 O loved of yore,
Than just a woman, nothing more,
 And can but love the loving.”



THANKSGIVING DAY.

I SOUGHT the house
Thanksgiving Day,
And found its inmates
all away,
Save her who sat
before the fire,
And, by her side,
her palsied sire.

At play, betwixt her fingers white,
A needle nimbly glanced the light;
But oft her eyes it could not stay,
To either side would glance away.

And on her right hand, open spread,
There lay the Book of God she read ;
And on her left I just could trace
An infant namesake's pictured face.

The Book of God, the housekeeper,
The babe that had been named for her,
The book and babe and she between,—
Through doors ajar I mark'd the scene.

And, while she sat before me so,
Content to share another's woe ;
A captive for her sisters gone,
Whom all their joy depended on ;

Now cheer'd to read of heavenly worth
For souls denying self on earth ;
Now moved to do the deed she should,
Lest wrong should lead that child from good ;—

Another soul, my heart felt sure
Could keep, if so surrounded, pure,—
If there God lured his thought above,
And here one shared his name and love.

The scene was homely ; yes, I know,
But homely scenes may haunt one so !—
That still her sweet face with me stays,
My days are all Thanksgiving Days.

AUNTY'S ANSWER.

MY child, you come, and ask me why,
The reason why I stared at you?—
Ah, darling, one can use her eye!—
Nay, did I stare?—You saw me too?

I stared, then, at these great round eyes;
And thought of all that each would see,
Of all the cares, and all the cries,
Ere you were old, you sprite, like me.

And then I saw these tiny ears,
And thought of how they both would grow,
And thrill and tremble, ere the years
Had taught them all they had to know.

I saw these dainty limbs here too,
That run and jump and snatch and throw,
And thought how little mine can do—
Ah me, it was not always so!

And what of these things?—Nothing, dear.
You ask'd me, only, that is all;
And old is aunty, old and queer;
So kiss me, child, and catch the ball.



Alas, the darling!—How could I
Tell her the thought?—It touch'd me so
To think how—were she but to die
Before she learn'd it all, you know.

A PHASE OF THE ANGELIC.

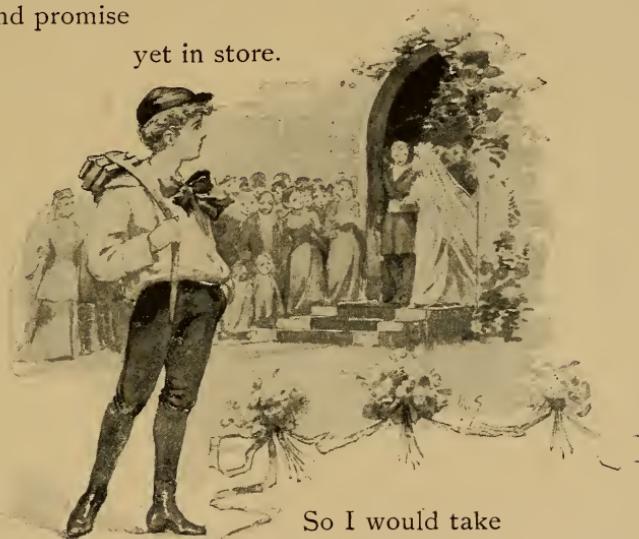
I WONDER not that artists' hands,
Inspired by themes of joy
To picture forms of angel-bands,
Are moved to paint the boy.

I know, if I the task were given
To lure a man's desires
By what appears the nearest heaven
When most his thought aspires,

I would not take a blushing bride,
For she may wed for pelf;
Nor him who clasps her to his side,
He may but love himself;

Nor matron, with her thoughts confined
To precepts preach'd to youth;
Nor man mature: too oft his mind
Is closed to others' truth.

But I would blend the purity
Of her whom I adore
With manly power for mastery
And promise
 yet in store.



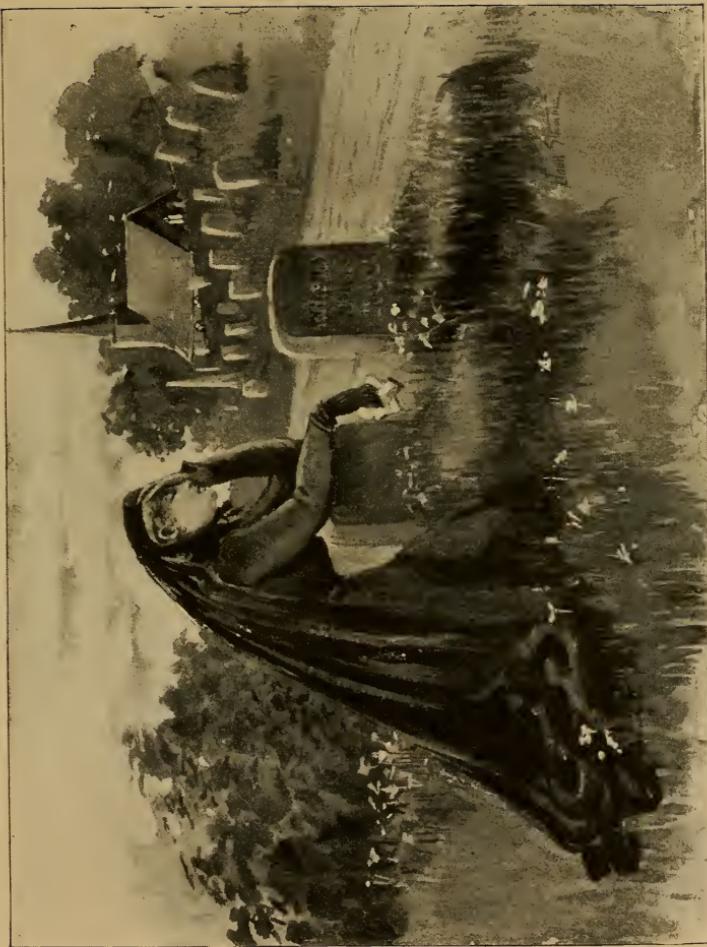
So I would take
 the boy who roams
Toward life,
 half understood,
From thresholds of those holy homes
 That face alone the good ;—

A boy who has not reach'd the brink
Where vice will cross his track,
Whose wish that loathes the wish to drink
Still keeps the tempter back;—

A boy who hardly knows of ill,
Or ill can apprehend,
With cheeks that blush, with eyes that fill,
And faith that fears no end.

And oh, I know that those who love
The purest part of joy,
Would choose with me from all above
The heaven that held my boy.

THE MOURNER ANSWERED.



THE MOURNER ANSWERED.

A MID the twilight's gathering gloom,
She knelt beside her babe's new tomb.
“ My child,” she sigh'd, “ did heaven not know
How deep and dread would be my woe?
For this did nature give thee birth,
For this,—to bury thee?—O God!”
She groan'd then started. Earth to earth,
Her lips had kiss'd the common sod.

“ Amid life's flowers that fade and fall,
What need to pluck a bud so small?
With ripen'd harvest full supplied,
What need had heaven of thee?” she cried;
Then mark'd the flowers that, while she stoop'd,
E'en yet made sweet her last-brought wreath:
Each full-blown leaf had dropt or droop'd;
The buds alone bloom'd bright beneath.

“ Why leave, O God,” was then her moan,
“ My widow'd soul still more alone?
Why wrest from life the last thing dear?
What harm that love should linger here?”
And lo, the neighboring spire above
Sent forth a sound that call'd to prayer;
And music fill'd from lips of love
The House of God whose door was there.



MUSICIAN AND MORALIZER.

WHAT am I "doing," night and day,
Loitering here with the flute?—
Doing?—why blowing my plaints away,
Off, till I blow them mute.

" Foolish " am I?—It may be so.
Who, forsooth, are the wise?
I to the wind my sorrows blow;
Others hoard up their sighs.

“Useless” am I?—The while I play,
Many another one’s heart
Throbs to my melody, till, they say,
All of his woes depart.

Nothing of sweetness fills the air,
Nothing of beauty blooms,
Save as a vision of life more fair
Over the spirit looms.

Listen to this now—mine and thine.
How could I show more worth,
Than as a reed for a breath divine,
Blowing from heaven to earth?

“Music-mad” am I?—Have your say,
Whether you blame or applaud,
I the behest of my soul obey,
Just as it came from God.

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